

Responsiveness to Instruction Topic Group Report

This document was generated by the Responsiveness to Instruction (RtI) Topic Group as their end of series report to the Department of Education. Representatives to the RtI series met over a period of eight months to study RtI and to consider the changes in the IDEIA 2004. The study group identified the implications of using a decision making process to identify Specific Learning Disabilities, in lieu of the discrepancy model in Vermont, and generated possible next steps. Participants included special education coordinators, curriculum directors, reading specialists, classroom teachers, speech-language pathologists, parents, special educators, representatives from higher education, superintendents, and principals. Our final session was held on January 25, 2006.

IMPLICATIONS	POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS
<p><u>General Education Instruction:</u> Teachers work to inform their decision-making based on ongoing monitoring of student performance and teacher practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine current literacy programs • Consider current school action plans and local assessment plans • Identify program links to scientifically based research • Study and practice methods for collecting student data • Address systems change issues that respond to identified needs from instructional assessment and data collection • Consider current instructional practices such as differentiated instruction • Is there leadership to promote, support, and sustain research-based methods of practice within general education? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete an RtI school readiness self-evaluation • Disseminate information • Involve higher education • Insure family involvement • Establish direct links to educational support team • Provide teacher training • Learn how to read research • Monitor VT RtI pilot programs • Involve school boards and community members • Work to sustain consistent leadership
<p><u>Assessment:</u> Learn and implement a variety of assessments to inform data-based decision making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal screening • Formative assessment/continuous progress monitoring to promote understanding by teachers and students • Assessment data is utilized to inform instructional decision-making • Data management and presentation, e.g., Aimsweb, Excel • Curriculum based measurement • Consider existing tools • Assessment development • Rubrics development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide professional development opportunities locally • Provide mentoring • Rubrics development and analysis • Involve students • Involve higher education • Consider transition from elementary to middle and from middle to high school - toward seamless transitions • Improve communication with families

<p><u>Family Involvement:</u> Families and schools forge partnerships early on to make informed decisions and monitor progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate early and often • Active participation in the EST • Common reporting practices • Parent-teacher partnerships / home-school collaboration / parent empowerments • Update information in school handbook making information more parent, user-friendly • Students understand their academic performance • Students become active communicators with their parents • Acquaint parents with change process • Request patience with the change process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a parent advisory group (mixed with teachers and community members) • Disseminate information through school websites, newsletters, parent-student nights, etc. • Conduct student-led conferences, and provide training on how to do it effectively
<p><u>Identification of Research-based Instruction:</u> Research-based practices are studied to inform instruction and decision making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance understanding of characteristics of research-based instruction • Become familiar with sources of information about research-based instruction • Know how to utilize research and measure outcomes • Review current practices relative to research • Move from theory to practice • School leaders should support teachers during and through the change process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study systems of support • Increase accessibility to research • Form study groups • Establish professional learning communities • Provide professional development devoted to the identification of research-based instruction • Allocate professional development time to research potential instructional materials and resources • Allocate time for teams to engage in meaningful discussion • Provide a forum for school community review of data; school report nights
<p><u>Fidelity and Integrity of Instruction:</u> Collaboration among teachers and staff to deliver instruction to produce positive outcomes for students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have honest dialogue • Engage in collaboration • Administrators understand the importance of fidelity and integrity of instruction and encourage mutual support among teachers • Cultivate commitment to change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical assistance relative to monitoring fidelity and integrity of instruction • Develop a model to monitor fidelity and integrity of instruction • Develop policy to support fidelity and integrity of instruction • Identify resources to support this practice • Share successes • Incorporate existing entities into the monitoring of fidelity and integrity of instruction e.g., curriculum committees

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers engage in critical evaluation of their teaching practices • Teachers embrace a culture of change • Provide professional support to teacher teams • Define procedures associated with assessing fidelity and integrity of instruction • Look at successful models that support this practice • Professionals and community members share a common vision • Articulate the role of supervision and evaluation in the implementation of fidelity and integrity of instruction • Identify and implement the practice K-12 • Be sensitive to scheduling needs and time constraints 	
<p><u>Tiered Levels of Support:</u> Instructional support of increasing intensity is provided based on identified student needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective Tier I • Progress monitoring • Document system of data • Targeted instruction • Supplemental instruction • Role re-definitions • Shift in-service delivery • Looking at existing resources • Trend analysis • Consider class size and caseload size • Consider whether there's a need for additional personnel • Cost analysis • Funding restrictions /time-study flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish clear definition of tiers • Develop consistent procedures • Develop strategies and instructional support toolbox • Intensify higher education and professional development across tiers • Solicit administrative commitment • Prioritize needs
<p><u>EST:</u> The educational support team utilizes an effective and efficient decision making model and relies on student progress monitoring data in assisting in decision making.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse, consistent membership • Data-based decision making • Efficient problem solving models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study models and characteristics of well-functioning ESTs • Examine existing job descriptions of key personnel • Review existing forms and organizational tools • Consider stipends and credit for participation in EST • Insure parent involvement • Develop procedures that insure follow-up • Examine the local education support system

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient decision making models • Collection and monitoring of data • Know how to talk about data • Support for teachers • Involvement of families • Definition of roles and responsibilities • Meeting times held sacred • Possibility of multiple teams in large settings 	
<p><u>Information Dissemination:</u> The department of education will work closely with stakeholders to communicate effectively and provide ongoing support through the development and implementation of the RtI process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-developed website for RtI • Link to action plans • Information being made available from the experience of the pilots • Newsletters from a variety of organizations • Higher education course • Communicate with VT Council on Teacher Education • Everyone needs to be in the know • Start with central offices • Total system support required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce well written, concise, memos • Provide training and information to administrators • Develop a brochure summarizing the basic elements of RtI • Develop a frequently asked questions fact sheet